



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

Joel Brunsvold, Director

August 26, 2005

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Mr. Don Hultman  
Refuge Manager  
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge  
51 E. Fourth Street - Room 101  
Winona, Minnesota 55987

Dear Mr. Hultman,

I would like to thank you and your staff for your recent visit and summary presentation of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (UMRNWFR). The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) appreciates and supports the efforts of the Fish and Wildlife Service to address the long term management of the Nation's Wildlife and Fish refuges. At your request, I would like to address a couple of the issues which we discussed during our meeting.

As I stated in my April 6, 2004 letter commenting on your draft plan, the IDNR takes great pride in a long history and tradition of waterfowl hunter management on dozens of State managed areas throughout the Upper Mississippi and Illinois River systems. We appreciate the desire of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to standardize waterfowl hunter management on the UMRNWFR and eliminate the use of permanent blinds in the Savanna District, as it did on the rest of the Refuge since the 2000 season. It remains the recommendation of the IDNR that you reconsider this decision and continue to allow waterfowl hunters the continued use of permanent blinds in the Savanna District. In addition, we appreciate and would like to recognize that you are reconsidering your elimination of a spacing distance between blind sites and will continue to utilize the 200 yard blind spacing requirement standard on IDNR managed waterfowl sites.

I would also like to address the issue of Fishing Tournaments on the Refuge. Our understanding from the meeting discussion is that as with any commercial event held on the Refuge, a Special Use Permit is required and it is the intent of the FWS to begin enforcing this requirement. We appreciate your commitment to consult with the appropriate IDNR officials during the permitting process and are confident this program can be conducted smoothly.

Thank-you again for taking the time to visit my office and discuss the UMRNWFR CCP and to provide explanation and the opportunity to comment on those parts of the CCP for which we have concern, as described above. We ask that you reconsider our request for reinstatement of permanent blinds and look forward to reviewing your new "preferred alternative", Alternative E, when it is issued. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my representative on your CCP Interagency Planning Team, Tom Beissel, Regional Wildlife Biologist in our Sterling office.

Sincerely,

*Joel Brunsvold*  
Joel Brunsvold  
Director

JB:TB